

1848-
1926



Grace
Arents

P.O. 5021
RICHMOND, VA
23220

LEONARD CITY

com-plete
con-trol #2



One onlooker identified Mrs. Jackson, a painter's wife, as the leader of the Bread Riots. She was said to have been a large woman carrying a bowie knife and a pistol.

Virginia State Library

Well, it's Fall in full swing now and change is most definitely coming on outside of my window. No, not kids jumping into heaps of leaves or families taking brisk night air walks by the moonlight. These things come much later around here and in a neighborhood far far away. My Fall is of a much dimmer fare than typical Rockwellian lore. For the great invasion of '98 is now in full swing. Sure the economy boosts and nightlife is more intriguing, but the city is dealt a crippling blow, the blunt of which falls within eyesight of my front porch. With the Fall enrollment rest assured that unbearable amounts of morons will destroy my street nightly with their excursions to and from the frat bar on the next block over. Litter, cigarette butts and cheap perfume will choke me in the evening, followed by broken beer bottles, piss on the house & the occasional pool of puke in the back lot in the wee hours of morning. I'm swallowed up by the lot of it and it's slowly killing me. With more students, the beer trucks roll in by the dozens & attack my senses with a barrage of American consumerism and poisonous fumes belching from the eighteen wheel beasts. Cars dominate me from all sides to the jam packed parking deck out front to the steel and concrete jungle that is my back yard. People aren't so nice around here these days in the midst of all the commotion, noise and black air suppresing us. I'm a wishin' and a hopin' for a big ol' nasty snowstorm to come and bury me inside far away and safe from the destroyers of my community and sanity, I could only be so lucky.

love, greg

This issue goes out to the following: The Guadalupe House in Tacoma. Monica from Vancouver, B.C. La Quena Coffee Shop & Anarchist Cafe also in Vancouver. Neil & The Activist Resource Center in Portland. John & Derrick in Arcata, CA. The Sister's Of The Road Cafe. Dale, Dave, Baron & Derrick for their endless generosity. Fifteen, Avail & the mighty OUT. for destroying me. Food Not Bombs in Arcata, Berkeley & San Francisco. Long Haul Infoshop. Katie, Amanda, Suzanne & E.T. in Berkeley. Dave Wedding Dress also in Berkeley. People's Park - today & forevermore! Richmonds in the Bay Area: Atom, Gabe, Krissy, Lee & Thad. Nisha for much inspiration. The Monroe Park Tent City Family 1998. Karina for staying true and most of all Sera for keeping me in line when I wasn't - I love you Sera!

Did you actually say freedom?

As I have oh so many times before, and as I no doubt will many a time to come, I sit a mere stones throw away from the most powerful & dangerous residency in the world contemplating if all that I've devoted my life to will ever even make the slightest crack in this massive structure that is engulfing me at this very moment. The ever increasing gap between the rich & affluent and the poor & downtrodden has splintered D.C. into a virtual tale of two cities. Within a square block of the president's living quarters you're likely to run into several dozen or so folks whose entire world's are contained within the confines of a broken down grocery cart trying desperately to sneak in a wink or two before the next cop jabs a nightstick into their ribs. For in our nation's capital, the land of the free and home of the brave if you have no place to call your own, you are not allowed to sleep. Not in a park, on a bench, behind bushes or anywhere. You are out and out lawbreaker. However if you choose to take the highway out of the ghetto booming enterprises known as drug peddling and prostitution, the cops will not only laugh and make jokes with you, but downright encourage you. After all you're not as bad as those pesky homeless and you are practicing a loose knit form of capitalism, right?

Racist Prison Hell: 1.5 Million Behind Bars

SAVE MUMIA ABU AMAL

So, as my already overly worrisome self pushes my fear and anxiety of failure to a whole new level, a bustling in the not to far off night air startles me. Upon closer inspection I find myself locked into an eye to eye with the most beautiful & incredible person I have ever met. Her name is Concepcion and she is probably well into her sixties, has a crumbling frame and couldn't way any more than 90 pounds on a healthy day, but when she smiles the whole world is aglow with the fire that burns so deep in her soul that I'll never have to question myself ever again. Concepcion lives here in Lafayette Park, the backyard of the White House and has since 1981. You see one day she decided she was going to give up all and live here in a neverending protest until the day that the world is free of nuclear weapons. Then I realized that one day Concepcion will die of old age out here and in doing so she will have accomplished more in death than most folks ever do in life, that being fulfillment of her destiny. This made me realize that all the encouragement in the whole world is meaningless, unless you believe in yourself and believe that when the time comes you will lay down and die for your convictions. Then and only then will you be truly free.....

Why can't VCU and the city lend a helping hand instead of a foot?

Dear Editor:

I felt most inclined of writing to Voice because of the newspaper standing in printing the real reality and because other newspapers might suppressed information from my letter due to the harsh reality and bureaucratic favoritism. The opinion in this letter is of my own personal expression.

The Park Is Our's!

It's everybody's park! Not just the city government or its cloudy joint ownership with VCU. The history of Monroe Park is deeply rooted with the homeless community for over 200 years. A place where foxes, clothes, blankets (which some people call prizes) are given out to the homeless, the compassionate park had been quarters for the homeless for centuries until about 10 years ago. Booker T. Washington was homeless in Richmond before he moved to Hampton, he had set foot in compassionate park and possibly used "OUR" park to lay his head.

On August 28 through the 31st, there was a weekend take over of compassionate park. Tent City was formed. General Strike Collective organized the take over. Friday, while setting up tents, organizers called VCU Police to inform them of their plans to sleep in the park the entire weekend in violation of city ordinance. VCU Police responded with threats of arrests. As organizers, homeless people, college students, homeless advocates, and members of Carver Community waited to be dragged off by the police, the police never came. By Saturday night, those who were committing civil disobedience had climb from about 50 to over 100. Everyone felt energized empowerment, it was like that of a giant first family reunion with sweet victory and compassionate park was safe.

Tent City couldn't have came at a better time coupled with harassment of homeless people, the expansion into poor neighborhoods with no plans to replace those displaced and who are extremely poor, and ASWAN's study of medium size U.S. Cities in their addressing homelessness.

VCU in recent years has grown, taking up larger tracts of the downtown area, the college is situated in the most extensive urban area in the state. State law doesn't protect citizens when a college takes over neighborhoods like it does in public housing or local government.

Homeless people have been cited merely for walking on the public sidewalk on VCU. As long as people are dressed in regular clean clothes, they're not harassed for doing the same thing. VCU efforts to keep homeless people "out of site, out of mind" especially when the student's parents are in town, is contemptuous.

VCU's highest ranking officials excepting a phone call from a homeless representative (before Tent City) is as good as a Monday morning joke down at the office over coffee and donuts. Long before the weekend take

over of compassionate park, Tent City organizers through phone calls, repeatedly attempted to set the stage for a meeting with high ranking VCU officials, only to received nothing but runarounds. Yet, VCU prepared statement stated the following:

The nurse who was inserting my first hepburn lock had difficulty finding a clean vein and stuck me 3 times before finding the proper one. This caused extreme discomfort and made me become very irritable. The following day my withdrawals were very uncooperative and my blood wasn't flowing the way it should have been but I managed to make it thru the day albeit in a very frustrated mindset. The third dosage portion was much more difficult as it combined 13 different pills and made me very nauseous. My spirits were really high going into the final stay as I knew the end was near. Upon checking in, things really started to fall apart. After numerous unsuccessful attempts at inserting my lock I passed out. When I awoke I was in a different room where I was told that they'd try again in the morning. After a brief night's sleep, I was awoken extra early to get my lock. On the second attempt they got it in. By this point I was ready to completely lose it. I was tired, hungry and my forearms were black & blue from all the holes in them. Sometime around the third or fourth withdrawal, my lock failed and they told me they would need to insert another one immediately. That's the last thing I remember hearing before I once again blacked out. I awoke a couple of minutes later and was in a complete blur. Once I regained my senses I began to argue with all the nurses and told them that I was going to leave right away. The doctor who was running the study then informed me that if I left early that I would not be compensated at all. At that point I didn't care, I was physically, mentally and emotionally and I realized that no amount of money can ever cover the cost of the emotional damage that I bestowed upon myself for partaking in this study. It was decided a month or so down the road that I would be partially compensated \$650 for my role in the study. Being the fool that I am, I took the money. It just goes to show that money truly does change everything.....





"While the university has tried to initiate conversations with these individuals, they have expressed no interest in discussion, not been specific about their concerns."

But on the flip side, a growing number of VCU faculty members have a different perspective towards policies and procedures in dealing with the homeless, including its own underground network to help the homeless (not naming names), which has contributed to successes of the ASWAN group and the empowerment of the homeless community.

People complained about homeless people urinating in the park, but they failed to check and see if the bathrooms are "chain-locked," or to check if the person was a student, or from a group home, or maybe a politician. It is true, for the first time in years, the compassionate park bathrooms are open 24 hours a day. Several months back, it took an outcry from homeless advocates to open the bathrooms during the day. During this year until May, Food Not Bombs, and churches would feed the homeless at the park while the bathrooms where unnecessary chained-locked 24 hours each day.

To date, 34 cities have been included in ASWAN's study, none of the cities lacked adequate emergency shelter bed spaces in proportion to the estimated homeless population, as in Richmond. Nashville, Tenn. is 8% larger in metropolitan size, but had 991 (year-round) emergency bed spaces compared to Richmond's current 169. Knoxville, Tenn. slightly smaller than Richmond had over 600. Mobile AL, much smaller (about 50 percent), had 331.

Birmingham AL, did not list exact amount of (year-round) emergency bed spaces in their Consolidated Plan. In that city between 1987 and 1993, the homeless population increased 62 percent, but shelter bed spaces

increased by 80 percent, giving a false perception of a decrease in the homeless population, due to the fact that fewer individuals were forced into the streets. In Richmond, (year-round) emergency bed spaces have been on a decline. In 1975,

MONEY CHANGES EVERYTHING

I suppose even those with the strongest convictions & ethics slip up ever once in a while, and I'm no exception to this rule. I'm not the all powerful messiah when it comes to the issue of leading a drug free lifestyle. I just do what's best for myself and go about my business as usual. My best friend is a complete and total alcoholic at the age of 25 and is driving himself to a quick and early grave. Instead of yelling and getting upset with him, I try to lend an ear to his troubles and be supportive in anyway I can. But, when it comes to my own body and mind, it's fair to say that I'm a tad bit obsessive. Along with the obvious abstinctions from hard drugs, alcohol and tobacco I also stay away from caffeine, aspirins and all forms of legal medication. I believe a healthy drug free body creates a strong form of self being and enables oneself to act consciously and think more logistically. So, you could say that it would take an awful lot for me to bend on my stances. One day after viewing a commercial for an upcoming medical study here in Richmond, I was intrigued enough to call in the 1-800 number and ask for details. After talking to the lady for 15 or so minutes I sat up an appointment to go take a physical to see if I might be eligible for the study. When the day of the physical came my friend Matt and I went downtown to the offices of M.C.V.-V.C.U. pharmaceutical department on the 12th floor. After taking all the tests (e.g., x-rays & exams) I found out that I was squared away and was then given lots of paperwork to look over. The paperwork explained in detail the study, schedule, drug and it's purposes. It went on to explain the possible side effects from the drug such as: dizziness, fainting, nausea and in rare instances death. YIKES! But I didn't see any of that part, all I saw was "upon completion of the study you will receive \$1,300 payment for your services. That is what it all boiled down to. I was willing to sacrifice and contradict everything that I love and hold so closely in my life for a little bit of money. What kind of crisis situation was I in that I would subjugate to all this for you might ask? Well to be perfectly honest the answer was none. I just thought that it would be cool to have an extra \$1,300 to blow. So with greed as my only motivation, I decided to participate in the study. The in-patient part was divided up into three separate portions of roughly 36 hours each. A couple of days prior to my first section I my first dose and enough take home pills to take at calculated intervals prior to my arrival. I checked in on a weeknight at 6 in the evening. At this point I was given my bed assignment, tagged, dosed and eventually offered a less than appealing very much non-vegan meal which I turned down. We couldn't lie down until midnight, as we had to remain up for four hours after dosing. The following morning we were awakened at 5:45 A.M. in order to get prepared for twenty something blood draws over the course of the next 24 hours. At first the withdrawals were every 15 minutes and gradually decreased in frequency as the day went on. We weren't allowed to eat until noon due to our dosing schedule. When lunch arrived the only thing I could eat was a roll and applesauce. As I had very little in my stomach the withdrawals began to irritate me and weaken my veins. The day went along very slowly and dinner wasn't much better, but somehow I made it thru with my sanity intact and got up and left in the morning. Although I was starting to contemplate my decision, I decided to keep going as it would be foolish to stop now. On the night of arrival of the second portion the first real problem arose.

WE DON'T JUST WANT A BIGGER SLICE OF THE CAKE...



...WE WANT THE WHOLE BAKERY!



there were well over 200 (year-round) emergency bed spaces.

Like an alcoholic in denial for decades, some City Council members claims there is no need for an increase in emergency shelter. **BOLONEY!** Maybe we need to call a few council members back to earth! And then cruise around to certain locations within the city that they know so much about.

The City Government response is that of the City Police, making police sweeps, locking up people who are repeatedly refused shelter and without options have to find public spaces. They must hide to evade arrest because it is illegal to sleep in public. If you're homeless in Richmond, it's a crime. This in itself, is civil obedience and forces defiance of city ordinances.

Complexity of those unsheltered in the 90's provides no solution to end homelessness. We can, however, alleviate the problem, but obstacles in alleviation are much more profound than in 1975, due to the NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard), restrictive policies, racism, greed, selfishness, and attitudes where its "us" verses "them" and them are undeserving unwanted, outsiders.

There is this veteran homeless that many Richmonders have seen sitting beside his

"caboo" box by Hardee's near Boulevard and Broad Streets. I've talked to him on many occasions, giving him a dollar whenever I had it. He claims that he doesn't drink or do any drugs. I believed him. An old man in his 50s' or 60s', usually humorous, and soft spoken (till you asked why won't he try to go to a shelter), his response; "I'd ain't going to them damn shelters" as the volume in his voice goes up quite a bit. He had bad experiences of continuously being refused shelter, and he claims that he's never going to a shelter again, while feeling self-worthiness, betrayal by the country that he laid down his life for, and victimized by society. In a way, he's right. He fought for his country and this is how he is rewarded?

On July 28, 1997, Richmond City Council passed one of the most prejudiced laws in Richmond recent history, one part of the three part zoning ordinances had since been repealed (church feeding restrictions). But City Council has not repealed the last by-right zone for homeless shelter and services, all parts of any zoning ordinances that prejudicially targets Richmond citizens (no matter the color, creed, or how much money they have in their pocket) must be repealed. On December 26, 1996, Another ASWAN Co-Convener Matthew Hilgeford

wrote to Bill Veno (Senior Planner-Department of Community Development concerning Richmond's Downtown Master Plan, the closing paragraph stings real reality like that of a bee sting. His closing statement included the following:

In closing the understanding we have of the past as well as the present, know it is the policy of a minority of influential people who are standing in the background, using their influence on people in high offices of City Government to pursue policies in order to move the homeless out of the downtown area. They have gone to great lengths in offering to donate their private wealth to charities to control public money to do the same. It is these people and their unfounded fear and prejudices that have exacerbated the homeless issue and the poverty-stricken citizens of the City of Richmond. Your "Homeless Issue Draft for Downtown Plan" is segregation in the purest form, superficially appealing but beneath, clusters good citizens of the City of Richmond into a caste. And casted out, the homeless and the poverty-stricken to sustain as they always have in the

past the heavy burden of prejudice.

Thousands of Richmonders are virtually on the brink of becoming homeless. Will future Richmonders who become unsheltered have to experience the same awakening nightmare of my buddy down at Hardee's or any other currently homeless individual that is repeatedly denied assistance and shelter? The average homeless person is no longer the ~~wealthy~~ drunk. It could be your cousin, nephew, niece, uncle, aunt, brother, sister, father, or even your mother. And is often prompted by a entanglement of a variety of factors: today's society including jobless, addiction, mental illness, affordable or available low income housing, employment opportunity, break-up of a relationship, domestic violence, or natural disaster.

Why can't VCU and the City lend a helping hand instead of a foot? Doesn't this kind of insensitivity perpetrate extreme conditions, hardships, and arrests. Enough is enough! The homeless have had it! They're taking back their rights, dignity, and their compassionate park! When Jesus came 2,000 years ago, he could've been anything he wanted, but choose to be homeless. I wonder why? -- John M. Felts ASWAN Co-Convenor

The above written article is an account of the Tent City we recently organized here in Richmond as seen thru the eyes of a good friend of mine John Felts. The article appears in letter form as it initially appeared in The Richmond Voice which is a community newspaper. John is formerly homeless and spends every ounce of his energy & time fighting for justice. He is a passionate guy that nearly comes to tears when discussing the plight of the homeless in Richmond. His letter gives a great account of the current struggle here and what we can do about it.

Anyhow, it's a very homey place with a good time vibe and Gillian, the radest waitress in town who lives above the cafe and gets her bike stolen a lot. The actual food is a bit on the pricy side for plasma donor like myself, but you actually feel like you ate good when you leave which is a rare thing from where I'm standing. The lime aid is top notch and second only to Bill's Bar-b-que. Vegan options are a possibility and there are crayons and drawing paper for labclothes for the kid in all of us. So there you have it, the coolest block in the city of Richmond and I get to enjoy it every day...

**Steal this bike and
incur the wrath of
bad karma from
Jillian Giatto.**



You know what the biggest problem with the development of inner city neighborhoods is these days? Well, it is pretty obvious that folks never think to enhance their natural habitat, but moreso to participate in the great suburbanization of cities by shopping and entertaining themselves in faraway neighborhoods. This mentality which is directly related to kar kulture and people's dependence upon it is destroying the social fabric of the modern community. With the above in mind, I go about my daily routine with the attitude that the 800 block of West Cary Street in Richmond, Virginia is the best place to be in the world. Right next door to us is the longest continuous running drug store in the city, the Paragon Pharmacy. Charles Moses and his son Mike run the place. Charles has been a fixture in the area for over 50 years. Many folks downtalk the Moses' but I find them to be pretty good people. They own most of the block including our house and the dreaded Bandito's Date Rape Center err I mean Bar & Burrito Lounge. With the exception of the current products it stocks, I imagine Paragon's is the same old familiar deli/corner mart/ drug store that it was way before you were born. Oh yeah before I forget the have the best fountain soda selection in town.

Right next door to Harvey's is the store with the most bizarre and confusing hours in town. That being Trash For Your Cash. A guy named Bruce collects undesirables from moves and stores it all here and opens on an appointment only basis. Tons of knock-knacks, books and records all at rock bottom deals. Next to Bruce is the ultra hip Heliotrope Vintage Thrift. Lots of retro 70's garb and denim abound this shop. The outside is host to our community bulletin board, where folks always leave very critical hand scrawled messages denouncing General Strike flyers & events.

Next door to Heliotrope is our streets claim to fame, the near legendary 821 Bakery Cafe. The staff and clientele are made up of mostly late 20's - early 30's artists and musicians. The actual building is ironically enough owned by the editor of the N.Y.C. squatting newsletter "The Shadow". Go figure.

Our little strip is also proud home to Harvey's Hardware. Harvey's is a small little space that is jam packed with everything needed to keep a house up and running and plenty of activist necessities. Once when I simultaneously bought a pair of boltcutters and a crowbar, I was told I was getting the Oregon Hill special. This made me wonder if there was some massive covert squatting goin' on in my 'hood or just a lot of petty thefts. Anyhow, the folks who run the store are always quick with a smile and even quicker with help.

"The People's History of Oregon Hill"

FOREWARD- When I first decided to take on this article I knew it would be interesting and fun but I had no idea how much of a chore it would be. After all I was just trying to accurately as possible recount the history of my neighborhood. After researching innumerable files & documents I realized there was no way I could cover all the bases. So what lies before you is by no means a comprehensive history, as opposed to my personal interpretation of the most important events and the folks who made them occur. This article was months in the making so I hope it was worth the wait.



The roots of Oregon Hill can be traced back to the 1850's when Richmond was experiencing growth & prosperity as an important Southern industrial city. Large majorities of the original neighborhood which was then known as Sydney, were of German and Irish ancestry and made their homes in Oregon Hill primarily due to the location, which was so conveniently established along the riverbank close to the nearby foundries and ironworks. Most notable of the local factories was the Tredegar Iron Works which played an important role in the production of armament parts during the Civil War. Years later many of the prominent Labor activists at Tredegar called Oregon Hill their home. Amongst these union pioneers were men like John Bethal, Muscoe R. Pace & George Perini.

A lot of the current day racial insensativies that exist in Oregon Hill can be traced back to this era. It wasn't that the inhabitants of Oregon Hill were slave owners or wealthy by any stretch of the imagination. The real issue was that the large African population on the other side of the factories were competing for the jobs along the riverfront and in most cases would work more hours for less pay. This shows that the old "Capitalism uses racism as a tool to divide the working class" theory has been in place longer than any of us would like to admit.



Needless to say the tension between the residents of the neighborhood and those of the poor African community known as Penitentiary Bottom escalated over the years. The straw that broke the camel's back came during this timeframe when city police recruited citizens of Oregon Hill to help combat civil unrest in Penitentiary Bottom. This instance helped formulate the foundation upon which the neighborhood rests today.

One thing the neighborhood did have going for it was a good sense of working class pride and comradeship. Once the Civil War was in full swing the men spent grueling days at Tredegar in the production of ironclad warships and cannons by the thousands to aid the Confederate Army.

While the men were busy at work, the women of Oregon Hill along with women of other disgruntled Richmond communities were organizing for better distribution of the resources. On April 1, 1863 (the city election day) several hundred women secretly met up at the Belvidere Baptist Church in Oregon Hill to discuss grievances. Mary Jackson, who sold meat in 2nd Market emerged as a fiery leader. Mrs. Jackson demanded that bread be sold to private citizens at the same rate it was sold to Confederate soldiers. After being shunned for weeks, Mrs. Jackson decided that the time was right for action. The next day she followed up on her promise in a big way.

off my girlfriends neck, I really don't think this is fair!" Finally, the last prisoner who wishes to remain anonymous, told about his situation with censorship and the mailroom personnel. He said, "The mailroom guards here, have been over-censoring my mail due to their own beliefs, because of this they take it upon themselves to censor beyond the bounds of their position. They are protected by the administration, especially through the grievance process, which is usually addressed by the multi-purpose/administrator Renee Williams. Who very seldom, in my experience is ruled in favor of prisoners no matter how legitimate the claim. Which forces you to have to appeal to the deputy warden who does nothing more then affirm Williams decision and then tells you to appeal to the department of corrections director who also does nothing but affirm the decision along with the rest of the prisonrats. On other attempts to clarify the problem it is only 'white washed' and thrown under the rug. Some of the censorship has been publications which they deny under the color of security. One magazine the denied was a tattoo magazine with no reason along with not being able to receive "Odinism" (A Celtic believe), publications along with censoring publications already approved through the department of corrections without regard to my freedom to the first amendment." With these actual experiences told by other prisoners I hope it gives a better perspective of what we face inside the Dungeons of Iowa and gives that personal touch this report really needs. With this I will give three prisoners a voice in each edition of this newsletter.

Before I go, it just came to my attention that fifty male prisoners were transferred out of state on October 19, yesterday. This come off the local TV news and from what they said the prisoners were being moved either because they were "Dangerous" or "In danger from others" though I'm not sure what the real facts are since the media is just an extended hand of the state apparatus, I figured it is just a continued move to create more prison space for Iowa's working class, poor and majority populations as the dramatic incarcerations here in Iowa continue. I will pass on further information in the next Dungeon Report.

As usual all publications are allowed and encouraged to use material contained within this and past IOWA DUNGEON REPORTS, as I continue to inform the outside of what's happening in these Dungeons of oppression.

D.A. is a prisoner at the Clarinda Correctional Facility in Iowa. He writes to the collective I work with on a regular basis and sends along copies of his Iowa Dungeon Report. The nature of his offense is unknown to me, but he is very prompt in replies and I strongly encourage all to write him at the address listed at the end of this piece.

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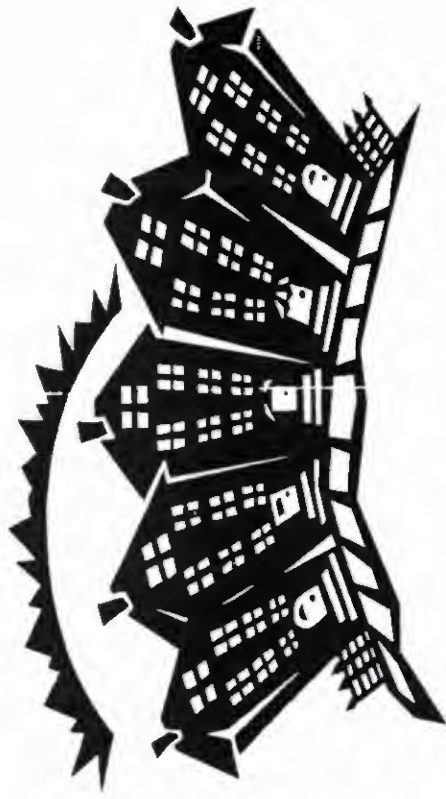
since most prisoners only make an average of \$30.00 a month from state pay and the majority of that pay goes toward court restitution and they have to purchase nearly everything including hygiene, postage and writing supplies and even medical care, the chance anyone who really wants to attend this college will be impossible. that from what I have heard from different prisoners, the few prisoners who could afford to pay, are the one's who would not consider taking the extra curriculum. On a personal note this only confirms my worst fears about the capitalist system, that only those with the money have a chance in this backwards society. Overall in this system of corruption any news of improved change is only a dream of lies and this is disappointing to say the least:

In an attempt to give **The Iowa Dungeon Report** some personalization I have chosen to devote space to this and future reports, so prisoners have a voice to present their concerns and the problems they see within the Iowa Penal System. I will start with Robert Schultz, a 70-year-old diabetic who told me about his problems with getting proper care for his diabetes. He said, "Ever since I have been in the Iowa system, I have had problems with the dietary department and getting the proper medication that corresponds with the diabetic condition I have." He went on further to say, "The doctor up at the Iowa Medical classification center ordered glucose tablets be prescribed, this was back in June 1997 and still this prescription has not been filled, that when I was transferred to Mount Pleasant Correctional facility, a nurse 'Refused to let me have them.' when I had presented to her that a doctor had prescribed those tablets, she commented, "That I was disrupting med clinic." at which I received a major report for speaking up, for this I received two days in the "hole" and sixteen days of good time taken. Also while at Mount Pleasant, I told the dietitian I could not eat Mexican food, because the taco's were hard shells and I could not eat rice, because it contains starch, and that was bad for my diabetic condition. As a result of telling her I could not eat Mexican food, she wrote me a major disciplinary report for racial slurs, this time I was placed into the hole for two more days and lost another sixteen days of good time. Then on April 26, of this year a doctor up at the Iowa University Hospitals in Iowa city, ordered that my diet should not contain no pasta, potato's, rice and other starchy foods due to my condition. Even after this was ordered the dietitian still refused to honor this change of diet, even though I requested this four different times. I was eventually transferred to the Clarinda Correctional Facility and still have problems with getting the proper diet, especially when it comes to the availability of a sugar substitute which is not always provided and starchy food is still put into my diet tray. These problems, especially with my age has caused me great stress and effected my eyesight to where it's harder for me to focus on reading books and see objects from a far. and I have noticed poorer circulation in my legs and feet which are cold and sore all the time. Terry Brass was the next prisoner to express one of his problems he is having with correctional counselors here at Clarinda. He said, "The number one problem I am having at this camp, is the number of counselors I have had since I was moved here two years ago. with a change of over four different counselors, it has a drastic impact on me, because they shuffled me around I can't get a recommendation to the parole board, which is basically kept me in prison longer. I have complained to different counselors about the problem and how it is delaying my release, in which one counselor or said quite coldly, "That's the way it is, and there's nothing I can do about it." while the other counselors just out-right ignored me, like they did not give a shit about me. I'm doing ten years for 1st degree theft and with two years done on this non-violent offense for snatching a necklace

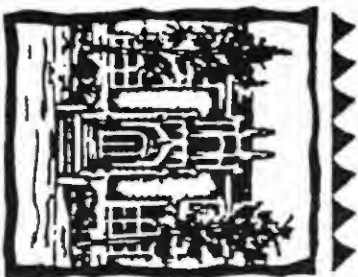
Early on the morning of April the 2nd the frustrated women marched to the Capital Square led by Mrs. Jackson who was reportedly wielding a bowie knife and a pistol. Many other women carried hatchets. They confronted Governor Letcher and when their demands were denied they stormed the 15th and Cary Street market area and began breaking into stores and seizing bread, flour, bacon, ham, sugar, coffee, butter, clothes and general household goods.

At this point, the city battalion was called out by Governor Letcher who ordered the mob to disperse. Firemen begin hosing the rioters down as Mayor Mayo and Confederate President Davis ordered the troops to load and fire if the crowd didn't split up within the next five minutes. After much tension, folks retreated down Franklin Street and took out a few more stores along the way. 25 men and over 45 women were arrested for their roles in the Richmond Bread Riots. The media manipulated the rioters out as savages and completely avoided the fact that the folks were near starvation. Afterwards a series of social service safety nets were set up to help alleviate the unequitable distribution of the goods.

In 1897 when wealthy tobacco farmer Lewis Ginter died, he left his family including his niece Grace Arents a substantial amount of money. Miss Arents became interested in community based work thru extensive travelling and soon became an important fixture in Oregon Hill. She was financially and personally involved in providing educational, religious and social institutions & programs that served the neighborhood. Amongst these are The St. Andrew's Episcopal Church & School, The Arents Free Library (William Byrd Community Center), The Grace Arents Public Housing and Grace Arents School (Open High). The individual histories of these facilities are very intertwined but still explosive on their own merits.



The building today known as the William Byrd Center at 224 South Cherry Street was originally established in 1900 as a nursing settlement house with the mission of serving the poor in the inner city. Soon social workers joined the nurses to help provide more comprehensive services. In 1923 the nurses broke off and became the Instructive Visiting Nursing Assn.



WILLIAM BYRD COMMUNITY HOUSE

The social workers continued addressing issues as a new group named after the founder of the city, thus becoming known as the William Byrd Community Center. Around this same time the Arents Free Library was established in that location as the city's first free public library. Throughout the decades the W.B.C.C. has played a pro active role in decreasing racial tensions and increasing services to the under served African community. This was accomplished by expansion of it's service area to include Carver, Randolph, Maymont and the Main & Cary Street corridors. These days the Center has been aggressively doing outreach into the surrounding neighborhoods as the services covered are immense and cover a wide spectrum.

In 1875, Annie Woodlief Jeffrey introduced Grace Arents to the St. Andrew's mission of the St. Paul Episcopal Church. Soon thereafter Grace Arents donated an organ and funding for a custodian to the newly built church at the corners of Laurel and Beverly (now Idlewood) Streets. In 1894, Miss Arents opened a small sewing school in St. Andrews. The following year a kindergarten, which eventually blossomed into a school building at the intersection of Cherry & Idlewood in 1901. Miss Arents presided as the principal of the school for quite some time. Her endless dedication spawned two other Oregon Hill landmarks that are directly correlated to her work at St. Andrews. Those being the Grace Arents housing and school.

THE IOWA DUNGEON REPORT

OCTOBER

Last month I reported in the Dungeon Report that state prisoners planned to ship 100 women prisoners out of state due to the overcrowding at the Mitchellville Correctional Facility for Women in an attempt to relieve the overcrowding problem at that facility. Well the director of the department of "punishment," W.L. Kautzky has carried out his promise to a degree in the way he lied about where the women prisoners would be transferred (A private prison in Missouri) to the transfers would be "volunteer" and not disrupt the lives of their children and families. Well in the earlier morning of September 23, 1998, 100 women or twenty percent of Mitchellville's population were awoken and told to pack their personal property, they then were forced to strip naked and their body cavities searched by male and female guards stripping them of their human right to dignity. The women then were given orange jumpsuits, handcuffed and shackled and then placed into one of the three vans for the long trip to Virginia, to the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women near Charlottesville, VA. That from accounts from the women prisoners published in the Omaha World-Herald it seems the women lives have been severely disrupted. One of the transferred prisoners Rebecca Tracy said, "I didn't volunteer. They forced me into a holding cell and then forced me to get on a bus." She then went on to say, "My family is devastated." Julie Stillmunkes, another transferred prisoner said, "She will miss her 3-year-old son Devan, that I may not see him until next summer," she said. "I'm upset." Another concern was the way they were handled on the trip to Virginia, as they were not allowed to leave the vans on the entire trip, which they were forced to eat and sleep in the vans and from a inside report not allowed to leave the vans to use the restroom, an uncalled-for atrocity in it self! Prisoners said that "No inmate will be required to remain outside Iowa for more than a year," but if tradition holds true when it comes to transferring prisoners to other states or for that matter to the federal penal system then I would not be surprised that these women will end up doing more than a year in the Virginia Department of Punishment.

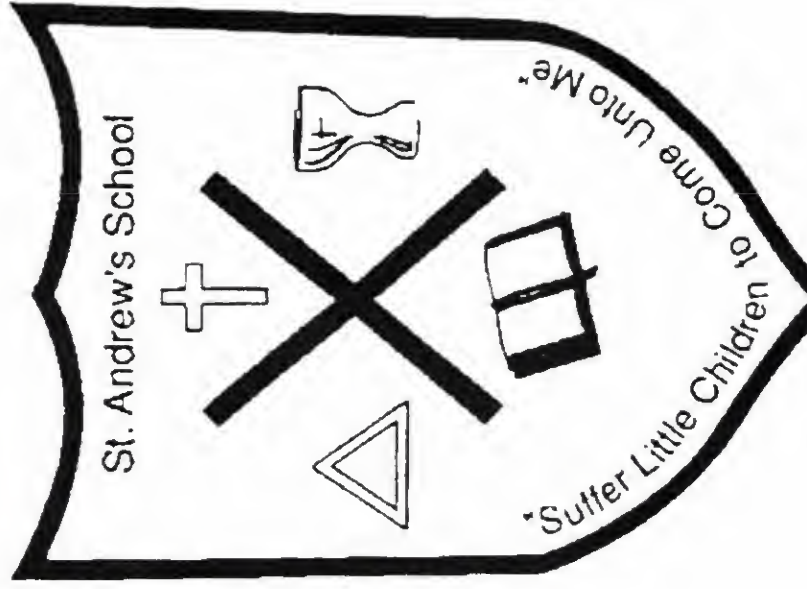
Last month a notice was placed on the unit bulletin boards here at the Clarinda Correctional facility, notifying prisoners that the local community college planned to offer college courses through the fiber optic network, that those who were interested needed to send an institutional "kite" to the treatment director if they wanted more information on this opportunity. Well I and numerous other prisoners sent in kites receiving a short response stating, "Will add to list Will get you more information later." Three weeks later after much prediction from the prison populace that there was a catch to furthering our education, a memorandum was stapled to all the unit bulletin boards "advertising" Iowa Wesleyan Community College would begin offering college courses at Clarinda Correctional facility beginning on January 11, 1999. Though once you begin to read down the memorandum you begin to read a list of "fees," everything from \$65.00 per credit semester, \$40.00-\$60.00 for each text book and an asses test prior to enrollment that will cost \$20.00. In all you must sign up for a minimum of three credit hours and prisoners would have to pay the money upfront, and there are no opportunities for student grants or loans through this program. In all the starting fees to even get started would approximately be around \$250.00 way above the amount 99.9% of the prisoner population could even afford



For a worthwhile education
learn the 3 'R's:

**Resist, Rebel,
Revolt!**

The houses were designed in the early 1900's on Cumberland Avenue as a sort of section eight style residencies for low income residents of the neighborhood. Thru many decades these houses remained a vital necessity for those who needed an extra hand to get by and were owned and operated by the St. Andrews Association, which Grace Arents left them to in her death in 1926. In the 1960's another row of homes on Linden Avenue also became utilized under the same guidelines. After neglecting to meet the basic repairs of these homes while simultaneously misappropriating the allotted funds for the houses the St. Andrew's Association evicted the tenants despite massive public outcries. The houses, some of which have been utilized as squats in the past year and a half, are in considerably decent shape as opposed to many in the neighborhood in lesser quality that families still reside in.



Meanwhile, building on the success of the St. Andrew's School, Miss Arents donated funding and land at 600 South Pine Street to establish an elementary school in her name around 1912. Several years down the road the school evolved into Open High School. Open is a small alternative school with rad programs like student dictated curriculum and community volunteering services. One day last Spring my roommate Chris (who attended Open) and myself gave an hour long talk to some students about the merits of independent publishing. The topic soon switched to radical politics which led to one of the kids to become actively involved.

After all the growth and development, the 50's and early 60's saw an escalation to suburbia as part of the American Dream sensation that was sweeping the nation in those days. This left a lot of the homes in the neighborhood in shambles and caused a sense of despair. The drive to the suburbs also led to a greater need for more sufficient roadways. This soon led to the construction of the Richmond Metropolitan X-way which destroyed close to a hundred homes. This also caused the split in the continuity of the neighborhood that today has many uneducated folks referring to the area North of the R.M.X-way as Oregon Heights. In 1958 a chemical producing corporation by the name of Ethyl moved next to the state penitentiary by destroying a 100+ year old Victorian Castle on Gamble's Hill on the Eastern side of Belvidere. Since it's inception, Ethyl's relations with Oregon Hill have been shaky at best. A multi billion dollar Fortune 500 business, Ethyl has grown to be a very powerful & dangerous entity in city politics. In the mid 80's Ethyl financed the construction of a park area bounded by a huge unsightly brick wall along the Western side of Belvidere Street. Word has it this was a ploy to block out the apparently not up to snuff housing facing the Ethyl Complex. In the 90's, Ethyl has co-conspired with city officials and V.C.U. in a failed attempt to displace Richmond's homeless, while destroying 13 historic homes at the Southernmost extreme of the neighborhood. In a blatant marriage of corporate wealth & affluence and city government back door policies a former director of employee development at Ethyl by the name of Calvin Jamison has just been sworn in as the new City Manager of Richmond. This is especially suspicious considering Calvin's scantily veiled lack of experience.

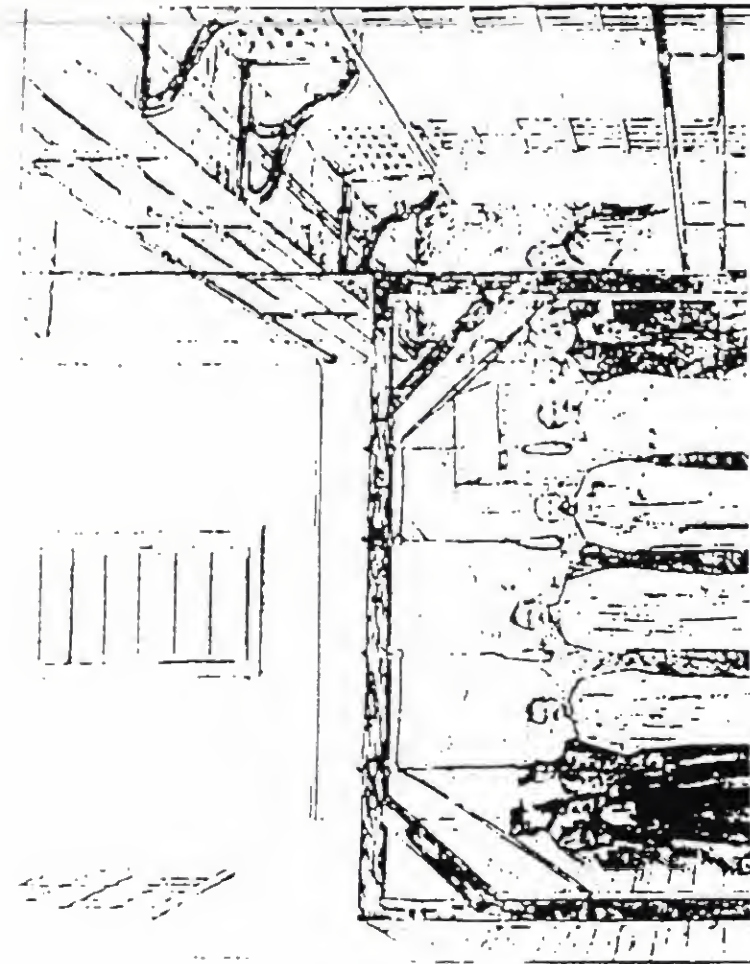
Ethyl Research Center

So, once you have your loose nit connection base worked out, you need to start thinking about transportation. These options are diverse and limitless. In the past I've utilized busses, light rail, freight trains, hitchhiking and every once in a while ridiculously lengthy walks. But to really break things down, you're probably going to rely on hitchhiking unless you are really adventurous. If you play your cards right while thumbing you should not only be able to get to your destination but also get food, places to stay and every once in a while a little cash thrown your way. Elaborate stories won't really get you anywhere, but a little creativity will work just fine. If you have time to spare and a craving for spontaneity I would personally recommend rolling with what fate delivers you. If a driver offers you a place to stay take it as there's no telling what will come of it. This is a great way to further enhance your social skills and learn a thing or two about yourself in the process. Modern mythology about the negativism surrounding hitchhiking is 90 percent scare tactics. If you have a halfway decent intuition and a bit of common sense you should be able to steer clear of most potentially hazardous situations.



Now, how the hell do you get by in a strange, mysterious city thousands of miles away from home? A good starting point to find endless resources is in a city phone book. In the first couple of pages you'll come across a resource guide for local social services. Looking for assistance as a traveller in a city is easier than you might think, because as transitional you will be viewed as homeless whether you like it or not. This will afford you a plethora of services of the emergency nature not readily available to the masses. Emergency food via food banks and food stamps can be issued almost on the spot.

Once you figure out the options in your travel locale be-friend anyone and everyone you encounter as valuable tips may find you. The homeless may lead you to a squat or camp for a good night's sleep, the wealthy may invite you home for a meal and neighborhood youth may take you on a tour of their city. Every day something new and exciting will present itself to you and the sky is the limit. So, with any luck and creativity you should be able to swallow it all whole and live to tell about it. Happy trails to you...



"The World For Free (well almost) Part II"

When last we left I was describing the intricate inner workings of living life either completely free or on the verge of from the crushing corporate machine in your city. Now to throw a wrench into the workings, let's begin to tackle life on the go and your ability (or lack thereof) to be completely self sufficient without a penny to spare. There are a few basic rules that if you stick by things will be a lot easier on yourself. The first and most important thing to do is lower your standards. If you are accustomed to eating three square meals a day and getting eight hours a sleep a night, be prepared for a reality check. Some days these comforts may be rewarded to you, but more times than not no such luck will find you. Another crucial issue to keep in mind is to be ready for everything to fall apart at every turn and not to stress out about this when it happens. This is the difference between a great adventure filled journey and driving yourself to the looney bin. An almost crucial pre-requisite is to have an angle to work from. By an angle I mean that you need a foundation or base where you can roll into any remote place and know where to begin. I have the luxury of having two such angles. These being activism and to a lesser degree the punk rock scene. These are by no means the only possibilities, these just happen to work for me. I'm sure religious zealots and sports fanatics are just as hospitable to their own as the next guy or gal.



SOHO President Kelley Lane

The 1970's saw a period of rebirth for the neighborhood. There became a renewed desire of professionals, student and families to call Oregon Hill their home. In the wake of this revival period two prominent community based groups that continue to play an important role in the development of the neighborhood were founded. The Save Oregon Hill Organization or S.O.H.O. for short played a crucial role at combatting V.C.U.'s attempted gentrification in the late 80's and Ethyl's destruction of 13 homes in the Summer of 1997. The Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council was established in 1973 with the basic intention to restore and protect the historical significance of the neighborhood thru housing restoration. The homes that O.H.H.I.C. restores are geared at luring folks to make long term commitments to the neighborhood in the purchasing of a home. O.H.H.I.C. who was also vehemently in opposition of the Ethyl demolitions has recently been rumoured to be "sleeping with the enemy" to ensure some desired Ethyl funding for a future project. Despite this, O.H.H.I.C. has just secured the rights to build the first new homes in the neighborhood in decades. The 8 homes will be completed by early 2000 and will be on the 800 block of Spring Street.

The greatest threat in the history of the neighborhood came in 1989, when V.C.U. drew up a master plan that called for the addition of 28 acres to expand the Academic Campus south to the R.M.A. X-way in Oregon Hill and Westward to Morris Street in The Fan District. After furious outcries V.C.U. came up with a revised plan in November that spared the Fan, but still called for destruction of Oregon Hill to the R.M.A. S.O.H.O. in conjunction with the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against the university under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The suit wasn't resolved until 1991 as V.C.U. withheld documents that were demanded by S.O.H.O.'s attorneys. This had a significant impact and everyone from the Governor on down voiced displeasure with V.C.U.'s antics. On November 14, 1990 newly elected V.C.U. president Eugene Trani announced the withdraw of the V.C.U. expansion plan into Oregon Hill.



Just shy of a month later the State Review Board of The Virginia Department of Historic Resources approved Oregon Hill's nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. This proclamation covers the dwellings and businesses of the entire neighborhood bounded by West Cary Street to the North, the James River Park to the South, Linden Street and Hollywood Cemetery to the West and Hollywood Street to the East. This act makes it nearly impossible for V.C.H. or any other outside entities to demolish a structure within these confines.

On that positive note I'd like to send gracious thanks to the organizations, citizens and beautiful history of my incredible neighborhood. If you still thirst for even more knowledge drop me a line as I've got volumes more.

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**OHIO HISTORIC HOMES
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Association of
Historic Homes
Group Home
Launches

THE SIGN SAYS IT ALL - OHHC Executive Director Allen Townsend shows where eight new houses by OHHC on the 800 block of Spring Street. These houses will be the largest new construction project in the Oregon Hill neighborhood in this century. Financial assistance for these homes is still available, so give

**As long as Workers are
exploited and oppressed
there will be...**



**WORKING CLASS
RESISTANCE!**

Daron, who was Dave Jackson's lifelong best friend from their fair city of Tucson, Arizona moved into Dave's room with him after a 6 year relationship came to an end. Shortly thereafter Dave met, fell in love with and proposed to a girl my the name of Naomi, who is quite possibly one of the most sincerely nice people I've ever met in my life. So, at any rate the three of them were one big happy family in the front upstairs bedroom.

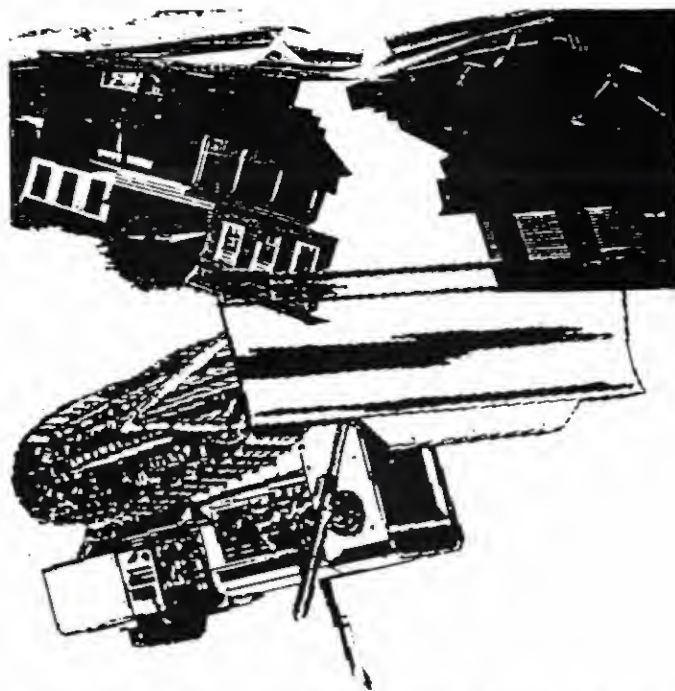
Meanwhile, Adam who is currently staying in the back upstairs bedroom was staying his stint in the closet. Adam is a bit of a man about town. When I see him in social settings he is usually in non stop rage mode. Around the house he is virtually non existant, popping in every few days at bizarre hours. He has a major problem paying bills on time but outside of that the perfect roommate. After Anthony who I spoke two on a grand total of 7 times departed a friend of Adam's Sandy moved in. Sandy used to hang out in the house several years earlier in pre Taylor days. Her stay was brief and uneventful. She always smiled and paid every bill on time even though she rarely utilized any of the services. A flurry of turnover occurred in the Spring when Dave & Naomi moved to the West Fan and Taylor departed after 6 years and new folks entered the picture.

Chris Terry, who I'd been harassing for months moved into the center upstairs bedroom. Chris sings for a local h.c. band the Flesh Eating Creeps and does a great personal zine with a strong comical slant focusing on his every day life. Nothing never sounded better. He also hooks the house up with more than enough free bread courtesy of his job at the Montana Gold Bakery in Carytown. Kevin moved into the upstairs back room from the student dorms down the block from us. Kevin is a highly motivated activist and honor roll student at V.C.U. from Connecticut. He has a brilliant knack for dry humor than can be stunning to those who don't know him.

After some room juggling and Daron's desire to move out of the slums, Brendon who plays guitar in Chris' band and works as a gutter hanger moved in the upstairs front room right next to the closet where I currently reside. August of '98 brought us the hands down coolest additions to the household in my stay. Sera & Kim are best friends thru an undying appreciation of one anothers writings in their various 'zines over the years. The similarities end there. Kim is an easy going, always laughing lesbian from rural Tennessee and Sera is an extremely complex amalgamation of years of living life at full steam ahead mode in New York City where she was a bicycle messenger. Yet somehow their split personalities feed of each other magically and enhance our household drastically.

The once overly intense machismo factor has dwindled down to a mere glimmer of it's once mighty heyday. The future of the house looks better than ever as bills are super low with seven folks splitting the difference and no hostility to be found. I can't speak for all, but my next move will either be a community space/ activist living quarter or another attempt at a squat, perhaps in the Carver District.

Demolition of this neighborhood has been made possible by the Ethyl Corporation.



Anyone who wishes to voice their appreciation is encouraged to contact 788-5000



A NOT EXACTLY CONCISE, YET NOT QUITE MINISCULE
ACCOUNT OF MY HOUSEHOLD...

After a false alarm opportunity to move into the historic semi-detached brick colonial dwelling known as 805 W. Cary St. in downtown Oregon Hill, I finally got the call from Dave telling me that there was a opening. I moved into the downstairs bedroom two weeks later. At that point it was myself (part time worker and full time activist), Dave Jackson (sports extremist and guitarist for Groundwork and 400 Years), Taylor Steele (Grandfather of Richmond punk rock), and Anthony (hip hop guy and V.C.U. student). Now to back up a spell.

Up until the late 80's the house was a fraternity of some sort unknown to me. After that fell apart a group of scenesters moved in and planted the seeds that the house grew into. First and foremost a classic punkhouse and to a lesser degree an activist household. Over the years the basement was host to 100's of touring and local bands and a steady band rehearsal room. The kitchen was site of many a vegan potluck. The back lot has been a playground for many a hotly contested kickball and wiffleball game. The living room was the site of Keith McHenry of Food Not Bombs first speaking engagement in Richmond several years ago. In the past year and a half local grassroots community group General Strike Collective has utilized the house for everything from meeting space to fund raisers to the behind the scenes headquarters of the Monroe Park Tent City.

The current makeup of the household is the most well rounded and productive group thus far, but to bring you up to date let's rewind. I moved in around mid-May '97 and left shortly thereafter to brush up on my roadying expertise for nine weeks. While I was away my good pal Dave Bird from Kentucky was spending a brief stay in "the closet" which is a room that measures no more than 9 feet in length and 5 feet in width. A very New York City style efficiency. Dave B moved once again in Richmond before returning back to Ky after only a 4 month stay in R,VA. While on the go I read an ad in M.R.R. or the like about a guy from Milwaukee who was wanting to move to Richmond and looking for roommates. So I called him up and offered him the vacant closet room. By the time I got back to town Phil who likes to ride his bike a lot and likes to drink a lot stayed his token stint before moving 8 blocks down the street, he now lives in Philly but will probably end up in Portland, Oregon sometime in the future.